

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FOR IOP/M

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: -

SUBJ: PRESIDENT KAUNDA PRESS CONFERENCE

LUSAKA, MARCH 13 -- ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA WARNED REPORTERS IN A NOON PRESS BRIEFING AT STATE HOUSE TODAY THAT WESTERN RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WOULD FORCE HIM TO SEARCH FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE EAST. HE ALSO WARNED THAT SUCH A REQUEST COULD LEAD TO A "MAJOR CONFLAGRATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA." "ONE THE WESTERN COUNTRIES GO TO THE ASSISTANCE OF IAN SMITH, WE WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO TO THE EASTERN COUNTRIES TO COME AND SUPPORT US", PRESIDENT KAUNDA SAID. "THIS WOULD LEAD TO A CONFLAGRATION IN THE AREA" HE ADDED.

PRESIDENT KAUNDA SAID THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS AND HE IS UNDER PRESSURE TO STRIKE BACK. HE SAID HIS COUNTRY HAD THE CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO STRIKE BACK AGAINST RHODESIA. BUT HE ADDED "I KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES (OF STRIKING BACK) NOT ONLY FOR ZAMBIA
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BUT FOR THE WORLD AS A WHOLE." HE ADDED, "THE QUESTION IS HOW LONG CAN I CONTINUE TO RESIST THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT OF THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE TO BE DEFENDED.....THE WEST IS PUTTING US TOO MUCH TO THE TEST.....THESE ARE SERIOUS DAYS AND I AM UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO HIT BACK BUT I KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF HITTING BACK."

DR. KAUNDA CLAIMED THAT EIGHT RHODESIAN AIRCRAFT WERE DESTROYED IN THE RAID IDENTIFYING THEM AS FOUR JET FIGHTERS, THREE HELICOPTERS, AND ONE BEAVER SPOTTER PLANE. HE ADDED THAT ONE CHINOOK HELICOPTER FELL IN ZAMBIAN WATERS AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS "LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING IT." AS FAR AS CASULTIES ARE CONCERNED, PRESIDENT KAUNDA SAID THAT TWENTY-TWO ZAMBIANS, TEN OF THEM SOLDIERS HAD BEEN KILLED IN THE FIGHTING. HE DENIED THAT THE RHODESIANS HAD ATTACKED A GUERRILLA CAMP BELONGING TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. "THERE IS NOT A SINGLE FREEDOM FIGHTER IN THE AREA. THERE IS NO TRUTH IN THESE STORIES," HE SAID.
O'BRIEN

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